

DELAWARE RE-ENTRY EDUCATION TASK FORCE

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Workgroup

September 23, 2015

9:00 am

Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

Administration Building #2, Conference Room #198/199

1825 Faulkland Rd., Wilmington, DE 19805

MEETING MINUTES

Workgroup members in attendance:

Heath Chasanov, Woodbridge School District

John Sadowski on behalf of The Honorable Mark T. Murphy, Dept. of Education

Eliza Hirst, on behalf of Tania Culley, Office of The Child Advocate

Frederika Jenner, Delaware State Education Association

Kathryn Lunger, Office of the Public Defender

Kendall Massett, Delaware charter Schools Network

Brenda Wynder, Lake Forest School District

Others in attendance:

Michelle Brogden, Dept. of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

Nancy Dietz, Dept. of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

Jackie Katz, Dept. of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

Alicia Keys, Dept. of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

Alison McGonigal, Dept. of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

Cara Sawyer, Dept. of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families

Kelly Schaffer, Dept. of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (consultant; by phone)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Minutes from the August 11, 2015 MOU Workgroup were reviewed and approved.

2. Overview and Discussion of MOU Topics and Proposed Responses

After the last Workgroup meeting a document of MOU topics and proposed responses was drafted. The document was distributed to the Workgroup. It covers topics the Workgroup discussed and highlights areas of EO 45 that have not been addressed yet, specifically data sharing. It was noted that as the drafts evolve the narrative could be made more general so that the MOU will be relevant over time (e.g. general names for assessments and names of meetings).

The Workgroup began by addressing topics related to re-enrollment. The first item discussed was a recommendation to place students on “out of agency” status when they leave their district/school for YRS care. The Workgroup discussed that the way the Department of Education (DOE) treats dis-enrollment varies depending on the care a student is receiving. It may also differ for level 5, perhaps due to the length of time youth are typically in the care of YRS. Dis-enrollment practices also differ by district.

District student counts were discussed, as well as the timing of release from YRS care and impact on re-enrollment. YRS lets districts know youth's anticipated release date, and if it's before November 1 then districts can count the student. The group also discussed that "out of agency" status is not the correct term to be used. DELSIS would indicate if a student went to a service school, and having a service line may be more appropriate. Additional information will be gathered from DOE about why students are dis-enrolled when they go to Ferris and the best language use in the MOU for coding students in DELSIS when they are in the care of YRS.

A suggestion was made to mirror processes used for homeless youth when it comes to re-enrollment of youth leaving YRS care. Certain parameters (e.g. transportation) would not apply, but the language that does apply could be spelled out in the MOU. Another suggestion was made to consider training individuals on processes if new protocols are put into place.

The Workgroup next discussed challenges youth and families encounter with re-enrollment. It was stated that in some districts a meeting will not be set up with a student leaving YRS care unless that student is already enrolled in school. A question was raised if a letter from DSCYF could be provided to tell districts where it is anticipated the student will reside. This would help to set processes in motion. Some districts find that after 30 days it is hard to get the information needed from families. If YRS were involved in the re-enrollment process they could help get the necessary information from families prior to the youth leaving YRS care. The proposed 45-day meeting would take place prior to enrollment and some of these issues could be addressed. A suggestion was made to consider what will happen if families do not provide the paperwork necessary for re-enrollment.

A question was raised about how many youth leaving YRS care change residency within the last 45 days. It is estimated to be a small number, and YRS could flag those youth as they learn about challenges identifying a definite home placement. A second issue addressed was 18 year olds who don't have to return to their parents and will still need a residence identified to enroll in school. Finally, some youth can't return home if they live in public housing and have certain charges. The group discussed that this may apply to returning to school as well, depending on district policies and practices. A suggestion was made that credit recovery programs, for example at an alternative school, might be a better option for some youth.

Next the Workgroup discussed sharing transcripts and report cards between districts and YRS. It is not possible to share between districts in eSchool. The group discussed whether the EdInsight Dashboard is a possibility. Additional information will be sought from DOE to understand how transcripts can or cannot be shared electronically. A suggestion was made to have someone from DOE attend one of the MOU Workgroup meetings to describe data sharing possibilities.

DSCYF provided information about how they collect and compile information for student transcripts and credit planning purposes. The department has a "credit planning sheet" for each youth and data is gathered from his or her prior placements. This information is not entered into eSchool. The information is sent to districts and is brought to transition meetings. For kids at out of state placements YRS could help to compile this type of information, though it is not current practice. It was noted that as a student approaches graduation his or her school would need to ensure the district has the cumulative records on file. DSCYF will explore how this

process could work for youth returning to school from out of state.

The Workgroup continued to review the list of information required for re-enrollment. A suggestion was made to note that birthdate, birth certificate and social security number are through available in DELSIS and this is how districts would verify. Health records can be requested from YRS medical. This would include up to date physical and shot records.

Next, the group discussed sharing information between districts about youth's charges. It was noted that districts get charges information in the Attorney General's report, but they do not get information that says if the youth was found guilty. In the draft MOU document the language for "found guilty of" can be removed. The Workgroup also discussed that the degree to which districts keep information about and track students' charges varies. The superintendent can designate someone to receive the Attorney General report on his or her behalf.

Some districts will say they can't enroll a student unless they have charges information, so this may be a challenge if districts that don't have a system in place are asked to provide documentation. Districts can have personnel trained to access DELJIS, but most do not currently access information through this system. A bullet will be added to the draft MOU document that specifies districts can access DELJIS. Districts will need to determine a process for tracking and sharing this information, and DELJIS could provide an alternative method. A list of the types of charges appearing in the Attorney General's report will be provided to the group. It was also noted that districts don't find out if charges were dropped unless the family provides verification.

Finally, the Workgroup discussed the differences in expulsion practices among districts and the impact on youth returning to school. In some districts expulsion hearings must take place at board meetings with public notice, in other cases at an executive session of the board. The group discussed that one of district's priorities is safety, and they may face challenges re-enrolling youth who are coming to the placement from out of the district. The district must verify all information before the student can be placed. A question was raised about whether districts have policies in place about students returning from secure care. Lake Forest School District has a procedure in place and will share it with the Workgroup for reference.

3. Next Steps

Workgroup members were encouraged to review the complete draft MOU document and to provide feedback by e-mail to Cara Sawyer. It was also suggested that Workgroup members share the document with colleagues for input. The Department will update the draft document based on input gathered at today's meeting as well as feedback received from Workgroup members and will recirculate the document to the group.

4. Public Comment

No public comment.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:50am.